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LETTER DATED 24 SEPTEMBER 1996 FROM THE SECRETARY-GENERAL
ADDRESSED TO THE PRESIDENT OF THE SECURITY COUNCIL

I have the honour to convey the attached communication, dated 23 September 1996, which I have received from the Secretary-General of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization.

I would appreciate your bringing it to the attention of the members of the Security Council.

(Signed) Boutros BOUTROS-GHALI

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Annex

Letter dated 23 September 1996 from the Secretary-General of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization addressed to the Secretary-General

In accordance with UN Security Council resolution 1031 (1995), I attach the tenth report on IFOR operations. I would appreciate your making this report available to the UN Security Council.

With the peaceful conduct of the Bosnian elections on 14th September, we have now passed a crucial milestone in the implementation of the Peace Agreement. The successful holding of those elections was due in no small measure to the close cooperation between IFOR and the OSCE, the Office of the High Representative and the International Police Task Force, and I think that we can be justly proud of that cooperation. It will now be for the successful candidates and for the Parties themselves to build on the election outcome and to work to establish the common institutions which their country needs. IFOR will assist in this endeavour and is also prepared in principle to support the OSCE in the preparations for, and organization of, the municipal elections in Bosnia, provided that these take place before the end of IFOR's mandate in December.

At the same time IFOR's primary military mission continues. There are indications that the post-election situation will be tense, with the possibility of violence from disaffected voters, and the consequent risk of reaction and counter-reaction. IFOR will stand ready to counter any threats, and will also continue to monitor compliance issues. High priority will continue to be given to fostering greater freedom of movement, which is still sadly lacking, particularly the freedom for individuals to resettle in their former homes.

IFOR is now three quarters of the way through its one-year mandate, and the recently agreed new command structure which will shortly deploy to the theatre will help us prepare for the execution of the last phase of IFOR's mission. Let me assure you, however, that IFOR's overall capability will be retained until December, and that IFOR will continue to work to build upon the successes achieved to date.

(Signed) Javier SOLANA

Appendix

Tenth report to the UN Security Council on IFOR Operations

IFOR Operations

1. The multinational implementation force (IFOR) currently comprises approximately 53,000 personnel deployed in Bosnia and Herzegovina and Croatia from all the NATO nations and - with the deployment of an Albanian unit on 9th September - 17 non-NATO troop contributors. The Force has been slightly restructured through the replacement of some heavier armour and artillery units with more mobile units and military police better suited to the needs of increased patrolling - of particular importance during the election period. IFOR's overall capability will be retained until December, when the IFOR mandate comes to an end.

2. In line with previously-announced decisions to streamline the IFOR command structure and to be prepared for the execution of the last phase of IFOR's mission, the North Atlantic Council, on 18th September, authorized the deployment into Bosnia and Herzegovina and Croatia of a new Headquarters based on HQ LANDCENT to replace Headquarters AFSOUTH and Headquarters Allied Rapid Reaction Force. The non-NATO IFOR troop contributing nations have been closely associated with the development of the planning for this new IFOR command and control structure.

3. IFOR air assets continue to provide the capability required to secure the air space, defend and support IFOR ground forces, provide support to civilian agencies within mission capabilities and monitor compliance. IFOR maritime assets also remain deployed in support of the Operation.

4. IFOR continues to fulfil its primary task of implementing the military aspects of the Peace Agreement. IFOR has maintained a continuous programme to patrol and inspect cantonment sites. Unauthorized weapons are confiscated and destroyed. Subject to the fulfilment of this primary task, IFOR's principal focus, throughout the reporting period, has been on the provision of support to the OSCE-sponsored elections, which took place in Bosnia on 14th September. This topic is covered in greater detail below.

5. Continuing support has been provided to the UN Transitional Authority in Eastern Slavonia (UNTAES) throughout the reporting period, and IFOR has maintained its regular, coordinated close air support training missions over Eastern Slavonia, to exercise plans to provide close air support, if necessary.

Cooperation and Compliance by the Parties

6. The Parties remain in general compliance with the military aspects of the Peace Agreement. The movement and storage of air defence and heavy weapons by the Parties is complete and as a result the overall security posture within Bosnia and Herzegovina has been enhanced.

7. During the reporting period, however, there have been several well-publicized instances of non-compliance, such as the Han Pijesak incident, when IFOR was denied access to a VRS site (described in last month's Report) and the discovery, on 2nd August, of 250 tons of VRS mixed ammunitions at an unauthorized site at Margetici (near Pale). This discovery resulted in Operation VOLCANO, when IFOR troops destroyed the Margetici ammunition over a 6-day period (from 18th-23rd August). Following the Margetici discovery, the VRS declared 16 other unauthorized sites, containing about 3000 tons of ammunitions in total; the VRS was ordered to relocate ammunitions from these sites to sites authorized by IFOR. This relocation was completed without incident on 10th September.

8. In another violation of the Peace Agreement, BiH military personnel were discovered in the Zone of Separation (ZOS) in Sarajevo. Following intervention by IFOR, the personnel were withdrawn from the ZOS by 28th August. It is now judged that all Parties are in compliance with the requirement to withdraw forces from the IEBL ZOS.

9. Apart from these major occurrences, the majority of incidents of non-compliance over the reporting period have involved the confiscation of small arms. IFOR will continue to demonstrate firmness and even-handedness, and to ensure that all Parties adhere to the military obligations contained in the Peace Agreement.

10. Civilian Freedom of Movement (FOM) continues to give rise for concern, and there have been difficulties caused by the inevitable increase in tension leading up to the 14th September elections, with deliberate ethnic engineering resulting in harassment and the eviction of minorities, especially displaced persons and refugees attempting to return home.

Cooperation with the High Representative, the OSCE and other International Organizations

11. IFOR's close cooperation with the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), the Office of the High Representative (OHR) and the International Police Task Force (IPTF) has continued throughout the reporting period and proved crucial in the organization of the elections. Within its capabilities, and subject to the fulfilment of its primary military mission, IFOR accorded priority support to the OSCE in preparing for and conducting the 14th September elections. In addition to providing a secure environment for the elections, IFOR support was provided in the areas of planning, logistics, and communications. In the first two areas, considerable support was provided, notably in the identification, mapping and security check of over 4600 polling stations, in the delivery and subsequent collection of election materials and ballot papers, in the distribution of absentee ballot papers and in the deployment and transportation of supervisors and observers. On 14th September IFOR operated a Joint Emergency Response Centre with the OSCE and provided and maintained an extensive communications network. The elections were conducted peacefully with no major disturbances or violence.

12. IFOR continues to work closely with the UNHCR in its efforts to promote the repatriation of refugees and the return of displaced persons,

including by contributing, as and where possible, to the improvement of conditions in the UNHCR's twenty-three target areas. IFOR will also continue to give high priority to fostering greater civilian freedom of movement.

13. IFOR continues to share information with the Personal Representatives of the OSCE Chairman-in-Office in support of work on the implementation of the Agreement on subregional arms control. COMIFOR has notified each Party that he is sharing with the Personal Representatives information compiled by IFOR in the weapons holdings of the Parties. This information should contribute to the implementation of Annex I of the Peace Agreement.

14. IFOR continues to support the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia (ICTY) through carrying out aerial and ground surveillance of alleged mass grave sites to which ICTY has given priority status; and to provide security and logistical support to ICTY teams investigating alleged mass grave sites in the Srebrenica area.

15. Consideration has been given to requests from the High Representative for assistance following the 14th September elections. Based on Mr. Bildt's request it has been agreed in principle that IFOR will support the OSCE in the preparation and conduct of the postponed municipal elections, provided that these are held before the end of IFOR's mandate. The implications of the deferral of these elections on IFOR force levels and drawdown are now being reviewed. In addition, IFOR is prepared to assist in the establishment of common institutions created as a result of the 14th September elections. The support and level of assistance will be determined in theatre on a case-by-case basis, considering IFOR's principal tasks, available resources and the impending drawdown. Consideration is also being given to means of possible support in setting up the Presidency's Standing Committee on Military Matters.

16. As IFOR begins to draw down in numbers and capability, the support it currently provides to implementing the civil aspects of the Peace Agreement will also diminish. The transfer of IFOR support functions to other international organizations and to Bosnian state and local authorities will need to be worked out in detail in theatre.